

Message Text

SECRET

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12

ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6628

S E C R E T BANGKOK 12583

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, TH

SUBJ: TALK WITH PRIME MINISTER

1. THE DRIFT TOWARD A MORE BALANCED AND SENSIBLE VIEW OF THE SITUATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND OF U.S./THAI RELATIONS WHICH THE EMBASSY HAS SENSED IN RECENT WEEKS WAS MANIFEST IN MY TALK WITH PRIME MINISTER KHUKRIT TODAY. IT WAS ALSO OBVIOUS THT HE IS OPERATING WITH MORE CONFIDENCE AND PRUDENCE THAN HE HAS RECENTLY DISPLAYED.

2. KHUKRIT HAD FOREIGN MINISTER CHATCHAI, AMBASSADOR ANAN, AIR MARSHAL SITTHI AND A NOTE-TAKER PRESENT WHEN MASTERS AND I MET WITH HIM TODAY. AS WILL BE SEEN IN OUR REPORTING CABLES ON THE MATTERS DISCUSSED, KHUKRIT AGREED UNHESITATINGLY TO THE SUGGESTIONS WE MADE. CHATCHAI AND ANAN SAT ON THE EDGE OF THEIR CHAIRS AS HE RATHER OFF-HANDEDLY RESOLVED QUESTIONS WITH WHICH MFA HAVE BEEN FIDDLING FOR MANY WEEKS. HIS POSITION ON THE RELEASE OF FORMER VIETNAMESE AND CAMBODIAN AIRCRAFT, ON THE RESETTLEMENT OF THE MEO AND ON THE DUPLICITY OF PEKING AND HANOI WERE ALL VERY UNLIKE THE VIEWS OF MFA. CHATCHAI ATTEMPTED TO BLOCK THE RESETTLEMENT OF THE MEO IN THAILAND AND WAS OVER- RULED. HE LATER TRIED TO CONFUSE THE ISSUE OF THE SALE HERE OF WHEAT AND COTTON EARLIER CONSIGNED TO SAIGON AND WAS PUT DOWN.

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3. AFTER THE KIND OF NONSENSE WHICH HAS BEEN GOING
ON IN THE RTG, WE ARE SOMEWHAT ENCOURAGED.
KHUKRIT IS NO GIANT BUT AS I MAKE CALLS ON THE MINISTERS
IN HIS GOVERNMENT, IT IS COMING HOME TO ME WHAT PYGMIES
THEY ARE. TODAY KHUKRIT WAS DECISIVE AND SENSIBLE.
I HAVE THE FEELING THAT HE REALIZES THAT HE HAS
BEEN TOO FAR OUT IN LEFT FIELD AND IS MOVING SMARTLY
TOWARD CENTER OR AT LEAST HE APPEARS TO BE HEADED
THAT WAY.
WHITEHOUSE

SECRET

NNN

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